

Message Text

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62/64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 L-02 PM-03 DODE-00 IO-03

AID-10 SPC-03 PRS-01 DRC-01 /069 W

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O 302345Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4239

INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE NIACT

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY

RUE JO/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY 2521

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 4481

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y -- TEXT --

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, HO, ES

SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEWS OF HONCURAS/EL SALVADOR NEGOTIATIONS

USCINCO FOR POLAD

1. I CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER BORGONOVO MORNING OF NOVEMBER 30 TO REVIEW STATE OF HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR NEGOTIATIONS. AS BACKGROUND, BORGONOVO DESCRIBED EVENT LEADING UP TO PACT OF BOGOTA DENUNCIATION BY EL SALVADOR FOR OUR INFORMATION ONLY.

2. RECALLING THE NOVEMBER 16. MEETING OF THE CHIEF OF STATE IN JALAPA, BORGONOVO SAID EL SALVADOR WAS REALLY SEEKING A FORMULA TO BE INCORPORATED IN THE MEXICO ACCORD THAT WOULD ESTABLISH MEANS SUBSEQUENTLY TO DEMARCAT E AREAS OF THE BORDER STILL UNDER DISPUTE AND THIS WAS ACHIEVED.

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3. AT THE THIRD NEGOTIATING SESSION IN MEXICO, WHICH BEGAN NOV. 20 BORGONOVO CLAIMED THE HONDURANS RE-OPENED THE QUESTION OF WHICH BORDER AREAS WOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE JALAPA FORMULA, ALLEGEDLY CITING AREAS UPON WHICH SALVADOR THOUGHT AGREEMENT HAD ALREADY BEEN REACHED AS WELL AS THE INLAND OF MEANGUERA. THIS CONFLICT, WHICH CAME TO A HEAD ON NOVEMBER 23, CONFIRMED SALVADORAN SUSPICIONS HARBORED AS THEY ENTERED THE THIRD PHASE OF THE TALKS, THAT THE HONDURAN STRATEGY STILL AIMED AT ULTIMATE RESOLUTION OF THE BORDER ISSUE BY ARBITRATION UNDER THE PAITRBO BOGOTA. THIS WAS FURTHER CONFIRMED BY BATRES' ALLEGED PROPOSAL THAT A PROVISION BE INCLUDED IN THE FINAL AGREEMENT THAT NO OTHER PROCEDURES (I.E. ARBITRATION) FOR RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM WOULD BE RULED OUT BY THE PARTIES.

4. BORGONOVO CONTENDED THAT GOES' CONCERN ABOUT SALVADORAN COMMITMENTS UNDER PACT OF BOGOTA WAS NOT REALLY NEW. AS MOLINA HAD ALSO TOLD ME HE HAD BEEN TROUBLED BY THIS QUESTION FOR SOME TIME AND HAD EARLIER ASKED A COMMITTEE OF SALVADORAN JURISTS TO REVIEW THE QUESTION. TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE NEGOTIATIONS REACHED THE NOV. 23 ALTERCATION, THE PRESIDENT WAS PROVIDED WITH THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE WHICH CONTENDED THAT SALVADORAN ADHERANCE TO THE ARBITRATION ASPECTS OF THE PACT OF BOGOTA WAS IN CONFLICT WITH THE CONSTITUTION AS IT REGARDS TERRITORIAL DISPUTES. THE COMMITTEE ALSO OPINED THAT WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PACT WAS PROPER, GIVEN THE LIMITED NUMBER OF AMERICAN STATES THAT HAD ADHERED TO IT. SENSING AN INCREASE IN DOMESTIC APPREHENSION ABOUT HONDURAN INTENTIONS, THE PRESIDENT APPARENTLY DECIDED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE PACT. TIMING THE MOVE, HOWEVER, DEPENDED ON THE THIRD STAGE OF THE MEXICO NEGOTIATION. IF ALL WENT SMOOTHLY AND AN ACCORD WAS SIGNED IN MID-DECEMBER, THE GOES WOULD WAIT UNTIL EARLY NEXT YEAR TO QUIETLY RENOUNCE THE PACT. IF, AS HAPPENED, THE SALVADORAN SUSPICION ABOUT HONDURAS' ULTIMATE STRATEGY WAS BORN OUT DURING THE THIRD STATE, EL SALVADOR WOULD DENOUNCE THE PACT IMMEDIATELY AND PUBLICIZE THE STEP TO PLACATE DOMESTIC PUBLIC CONCERN. THIS, OF COURSE, IS WHAT CAME TO PASS. BORGONOVO FLEW TO MEXICO ON NOV. 25 TO EXPLAIN GOES ACTION TO THEIR MEXICAN HOSTS; HE DID NOT INTRUDE INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS AT THAT TIME BECAUSE HE WANTED THE HONDURAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO CONTINUE TO TREAT AMBASSADOR GALINDO POHL AS THE CHIEF SALVADORAN NEGOTIATOR AND HE DID NOT WISH TO MAKE HIS TRIP APPEAR TO BE

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ONE AIRMED AT RESOLVING A CRISIS.

5. BORNOVO SAID THAT THE GOES REALIZED THAT DENUNCIATION OF THE PACT WOULD HAVE INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS. WHILE STRENGTHENING THE GOVT HAND AT HOME (WHICH IT HAS DONE, AT LEAST IN TERMS OF THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION), IT WOULD PROBABLY FORCE THE HONDURANS TO BARGAIN HARDER; THUS AGREEMENT BY DECEMBER 15 WOULD BECOME EVEN MORE UNLIKELY. NONETHELESS, THE SALVADORANS WERE GAMBLING THAT HONDURAS

REALLY DID WANT EVENTUAL SETTLEMENT, BY ONE MEANS OR ANOTHER, AND THAT THE MOLINA/LOPEZ UNDERSTANDINGS WOULD ASSURE THAT THE CONFLICT DID NOT ESCALATE. BORGONOVO SAID THAT THE TALKS COULD WELL BE POSTPONED AND, LIKE PRESIDENT MOLINA, IMPLIED THAT THEIR DEFERRAL UNTIL AFTER THE MARCH ELECTIONS WOULD NOT BE UNDESIRABLE AND THAT THIS HAD BEEN COMMUNICATED TO THE HONDURAVS.

6. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT THE TALKS IN MEXICO CONTINUED EVEN AFTER THE RENUNCIATION OF THE PACT BY EL SALVADOR. SESSIONS WERE EVIDENTLY HELD NOVEMBER 27 AND 28 BUT ON NOVEMBER 29, THE HONDURAN DELEGATION FORMALLY REQUESTED THAT THE GOES CLARIFY ITS RECENT ACTIONS AND SUSPENDED THE SESSIONS UNTIL IT DID SO. BORGONOVO HAS SINCE ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS TO THE SALVADORAN DELEGATION TO SUBMIT AN EXPLANATION OF HIS COUNTRY'S LEGAL POSITION TO THE HONDURANS AND IS NOW AWAITING THE HONDURAN RESPONSE TO DETERMINE IF THEY ARE SERIOUS ABOUT PURSUING THE TALKS AT THIS TIME OR NOT. IN THE EVENT HONDURAS FINDS THE SALVADORAN EXPLANATION INADEQUATE, SALVADOR WILL SUGGEST THAT THE TALKS BE DEFERRED UNTIL APRIL 1974.

7. I TOOK THE OCCASION TO STRESS TO BORGONOVO OUR INTEREST THAT THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS NOT RESULT IN RENEWED CONFLICT AND ALSO SUGGESTED THAT CONTACTS BETWEEN LOCAL MILITARY COMMANDERS ALONG THE BORDER COULD BE HELPFUL (STATE 233087). I SAID THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO OFFER APPROPRIATE INFORMATION ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS ON EITHER SIDE OF THE BORDER WHICH COULD CLARIFY MATTERS AND HELP AVOID MINUNDERSTANDINGS BUT STRESSED THAT THE US WAS NOT ATTEMPTING TO INTERVENE IN DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE INDICATED INTEREST IN OUR OFFER.

MOSKOWITZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, NEGOTIATIONS, BORDER CONTROLS, MEETINGS, BOUNDARIES, COURTS, BOGOTA PACT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: smithrj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SANS04481
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SAN SALVADOR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973112/aaaaabce.tel
Line Count: 144
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: smithrj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <17-Jan-2002 by smithrj>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEWS OF HONCURAS/EL SALVADOR NEGOTIATIONS USCINCO FOR POLAD
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, HO, ES
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005